

A  
SERMON

Preach'd at the

ASSIZES

Held for the

County of Surrey,

A T

*Kingston upon Thames,*

*March 30. 1699.*

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By *HENRY HESKETH*, Rector of  
*Charlewood*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to  
His Majesty.

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*London*, Printed for *Walter Kettilby*, at the *Bishop's Head*  
in *St. Paul's Church-yard*. 1699:

A  
SERMON

ON THE

ATTEMPT TO

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Printed for Wm. A. Smith, at the  
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To the Right Honourable  
**Sir JOHN HOLT, Kt.**

Lord Chief Justice of *England*, and  
One of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy-Council.

MY LORD,

**I**T is by Your Lordship's Command (for such any signification of Your Desire shall always be to me) that this Discourse is made thus Publick; and the Kindness that you have shewed to the Author, makes it Duty in him to lay it with all Humility and Thankfulness at your Feet.

I did not think that there was any thing in it, to recommend it to such a kind Acceptance, unless Honesty and Plain-dealing come in Reputation again.

But when I saw Your Lordship's Thoughts seconded by the Worthy Gentlemen upon the Bench, and Grand Jury too, I confess I was affected, not so much with the favour shew'd to my self (God knows)

## The Epistle Dedicatory.

as with the joyful hope, that the true Spirit and Temper of Religion breathed in those Persons, who by the Influence they have upon, as well as Interest in their Country, may happily propagate it to others below them.

May God Almighty verifie the Presage, and inspire them with Zeal in this Noble Design. May that Heavenly Dew, which now I begin to hope is fallen upon the top of Hermon, refresh not only the immediate Declensions, but at last Water the very Fields of Zion. And may Your Lordship, and all those Worthy Persons, rejoice in those Blessings which God hath promised to give there to all good Men now, and in those greater Portions of Bliss that he hath provided for such hereafter. This is, and shall be the daily Prayer of,

My LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most humble and  
obedient Servant

HENRY HESKETH.



## 1 TIM. i. 9.

*Knowing this, that the Law is not made  
for a Righteous Man, but for the  
Lawless and Disobedient, for the  
Ungodly and for Sinners, for Unholy  
and Prophane, &c.*

**T**HE Connexion of these Words is not so very plain, but that we may pertinently enough stay to clear it; and the rather because doing that, may let us easilier into the meaning of them.

The Apostle had in the precedent Verses reflected with some smartness upon a company of pretended Apostles and false Teachers, that had crept into the Conventions of Christians, who pretending to a more perfect understanding of the Law than other Men, boasted themselves to be the only true Teachers of it, and seeming to penetrate deeper into the more abstruse sence thereof, they took occasion to teach the belief of some strange mystical *Genealogies*, and to amuse Men's Heads with needless though curious Speculations, and Questions of no use, either to Faith or Manners.

It

It is very probable, the Apostle meant that primitive Sect of the *Gnosticks*, so called from their pretending to a deeper and more exact Knowledge of the Myſteries of Chriſtian Religion than others; and his ſpeaking of their buſying themſelves about *Genealogies*, &c. makes it very clear, that he meant that Peſtilent Sect, which made a great noiſe with theſe; a Specimen of which the Learned *Grotius* gives us in his Notes upon this place.

Having reflected upon theſe high Law Preachers, with a deſign to warn *Timothy* and others to beware of them, leſt what he had ſaid might be miſinterpreted; as if he meant to diſparage or undervalue the Law, he tells us, *ver. 8.* that *the Law is good, if it be uſed lawfully, i. e.* to that end and purpoſe for which it was made; which was not to imploy Men in *Genealogies*, and vain Janglings, but to excite them to the doing of that good which it commanded, as well as to reſtrain them from the Evil it forbid. And when Men uſe it themſelves, and teach others to uſe it to theſe Ends, they uſe it as they ſhould; and when they preach it up to this End, they do laudably and well.

But it was not ſo very proper and pertinent to make ſuch a noiſe with preaching the Law to Chriſtians, who if they answer'd their Character were good Men, for whom the Law was not intended; for we ought to know this, that *the Law was not made for a Righteous Man, but for the Lawleſs and Diſobedient, for the Ungodly and for Sinners, for Unholy and Profane, &c.*

In ſpeaking to which Words, I ſhall crave your Patience only while I do theſe two general things.

I. Endeavour to give the true sense and meaning of them.

II. And then endeavour to make that sense as useful to us as I can ; by drawing some such Inferences from it, as may be pertinent to this Meeting, and the end of it.

I. I begin with the first, in which it will be needful to shew,

1. In what sense, and upon what reason it is here said, that the *Law is not made for a righteous Man*.

2. In what sense, and upon what reason, it is said to be *made for the Lawless and Disobedient, for the Ungodly and for Sinners* in general ; and especially for such profane and wicked Persons as he afterwards particularly instanceth in.

These two I think will be enough on this first general ; for I do not think it so needful to waste our time in giving the Notion of a *Righteous Man*, for whom the Law is said not to be made.

This is plain enough in Holy Scripture, if Men would let it be so, and had not some ill Ends in perplexing the Notion of it. I confess there are two Notions of a Righteous Man, as well as of Righteousness in Scripture ; the one more restrained, and then it signifies a Just Man ; and the other more lax and large, and then it is the same as a Good Man, *i. e.* one that is careful to do his Duty in all the Instances of it, respecting God, his Brother, or himself, which

our Apostle expresseth by *living soberly, and righteously, and godly in this World*, Tit. 2. 12.

It is commonly taken in this sense, and I believe almost always so, where it is singly named, and when one of the other words are not joyned with it, as in this place, and a-hundred more both in the V. and N.T. and the word is very proper in this sense: For as all Duty, of what nature soever, is founded in Justice, and the variations of one are but so many Instances of the other; so a good Man is properly called a righteous, or a just Man, because he is just to his God, just to his Neighbour, and just to himself.

Not alas that he is always exactly so, and comes up to the Rule in every thing; for this is a state of Imperfection and Weakness, wherein the very best Men are sometimes born down by surprize, and the violence of Temptations, &c. but being sincerely so to his Power, begging Pardon for what he falls short in, and striving still to do better, he is upon the gracious Terms of the Gospel reputed a righteous Man, and shall be accepted as such.

But now to come to our purpose, how is the Law said not to be made for such a one? Hath a good Man no Interest in the Law? nor may he expect the benefit thereof; is not a good Man at all concerned to regard God's Laws? or is he not chargeable with Sin, if he happen to transgress them? doth this favour those wild freaks of Antinomianism, that we have heard vented in this loose Age? that a Child of God is not concern'd about the drudgery of Duty, or obliged to it, that it is no great matter whether he regard the Law of God or not. He is justified by Faith in Christ, and whether he observe the Law, or transgress it, is no great Matter,

ter, the one shall no more help on, than the other shall prejudice his Salvation.

But must we understand this Speech of our Apostle to any such purpose, or in Patronage of it? God forbid! This were to abuse the Law indeed, and perhaps in a much worse sense than these Hereticks did.

So that you see it will be needful to give the true sense of this Speech of our Apostle, and rescue it from those gross Abuses that have been put upon it, and those wild Inferences that have been deduced from it in this Enthusiastick Age.

To which purpose I observe first negatively, that we must not understand this Saying absolutely, or think that it holds  $\kappa\alpha\theta' \omicron\lambda\omega$ , as the Schools speak; as if either,

1. A good Man were not at all concerned in the Law, or had not right to claim the Benefit of it in any case; for it is both his protection from Evil, and remedy against it; and he may warrantably apply to it for both these ends.

So that in this sense the reverse to the Text is true, the Law is made for the Righteous, and not for the Sinner. It is made to protect the Innocent, and not the Guilty; to secure good Men from Wrong, and to repair them when they receive it.

It is a wild freakish Conceit to think the contrary, as some ancient Hereticks, and a present Spawn of them among us pretend to do, as if by a seeming over-strictness in this and some other, both Doctrines and Practices, they would conceal or compensate for their Looseness and Blasphemy in others.

There is an extremity, I must confess, in this, as there is usually in most Cases of this Nature, and the Apostle seems to tax it in the Christians at *Corinth*, that is, to go to Law for every Trifle, and to implead Men presently for every little Trespas; to take every Advantage in Law that another Man's Ignorance and Simplicity may give us; to be ἀνεξ Bodixavoi. *righteous evermuch*, as Solomon calls it, *Eccl. 7.16.* for many Cases may happen, in which it will not become a good Man, or is hardly consistent with that Character, to be rigorous in Prosecuting another, though in strictness the Law may be on his side. Lesser Injuries were much better to be born, than rigorously to be Prosecuted. And our Saviour seems not only to Advise but Command it, in that seeming hard Saying, *S. Mat. 5. 19, 20.* the meaning of which is only this, that it were much better and wiser, in many Cases, to put up lesser and tolerable Injuries, than revengefully to Prosecute him that offer'd them, and force him to make the utmost reparation.

But where there are Extremities, there is usually a just and vertuous Medium; and so there is in this Case, and that is the warrantableness of a good Man's expecting the protection of Law in all Cases, and pleading the Benefit of it in some. For the great fundamental Reason and Intention of Law is, that an Innocent Person should be protected from Evil in all Cases, and suffer it in none.

2. We must not so interpret this Saying, as if a good Man were not under the obligation of Law, or not in duty bound to regard and obey both the Laws of God, and of his Country too, as much as any other Man.

There

There hath a wild Doctrine indeed been propagated in these looser Ages, that a good Man is above Law, and manumitted from it, is a Freeman in Christ, and must not be *the Servant of Men*. Dominion and Property is founded in Grace, and the Saints are to give Laws to others, and not to receive Laws from them.

What Mischiefe hath been done under the Umbrage of this Doctrine, and what barbarous things it hath been pleaded in vindication of, those that have either considered some late Passages in this Nation, or read the Story of the wild proceedings of the Anabaptists in *Germany* before, are able to tell you. And were it not that the Jesuits Morals are well known, and their Avowing, not only the Innocency but Merit of the most unchristian things that are done for the Interest of their Church, it might be thought impossible, that Men that wear the Profession of Christianity, should so unlearn their good Religion, as to commit such things under pretence of it.

But that this Inference also is far from being warranted by any thing our Apostle means in this Saying, is evident. For,

1. The Divine Laws are the Rule of a good Man's Life and Actions; and the Gospel is so far from tasking these, or discharging good Men from them, that it ties the Obligation to them closer and more strongly: And this is spoken so expressly, both by our Saviour, *Mat. 5. 17.* and our own Apostle too, *Rom. 3. ult.* that none can well mistake it.

2. And we find the same Apostle as express too, as to a good Man's Obligation to the Laws of his King and Country; and as long as the *five first Ver-*  
*ses*



*ses of the 13th Chapter to the Romans* are uncanceled, there will be no avoiding of it, nor any pretence of Saintship, or Clergyship either (if you will give me leave to make a Word) that can excuse or discharge from it. For according to the Doctrine in that place, those that think otherwise, and act upon those Thoughts, may receive to themselves Damnation, with a *non obstante* either to their being Clergymen or Saints.

3. No nor 3dly, must we so expound this Passage, as either to teach, or think, that a Righteous Man doth not sin, or offend God, if he do in any thing transgress his Law.

I confess, so far as any Man is Righteous, so far he is from transgressing God's Law; and in proportion to his failing in any Duty which that Law requires, or committing any Evil which it forbids, so far he falls short of the Character of a Righteous Man. But this being (as I said before) a State of Imperfection, in which (saith Solomon) there is *not a righteous Man that sinneth not*, some Transgressions of the Law are incident to a Righteous Man, but these must not be exempted from being Sins.

I enter this Remark in opposition to another freakish Opinion, that hath been propagated in consequence of the *Antinomian Doctrines*, touched at before. For it is pretended, that God sees no Sin in his People; and, that as there is no Condemnation, so there is nothing condemnable in them who are in Christ Jesus; but those things which in them that are out of Christ, are formally Sins, lose their Malignity, and are no Sins in them that are in him.

There



There was once a Book printed in *London, Anno 1656.* and with the Approbation and Commendation of most of the leading Ministers there (especially of the Independant Party) in which there is this memorable Passage: 'In case you be at any time, by reason of the weakness of your Faith, or strength of your Temptation, prevailed with to transgress any of Christ's Commands, beware you do not thereupon take occasion to call Christ's Love to you into question, but believe firmly, that he loves you as dearly as he did before you transgressed.—— For this is a certain Truth, as no Good in you, or done by you, did, or can move Christ to love you the more; so no Evil in you, or done by you, can move him to love you the less.'

This Book was called, *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*: And it might truly be called of *Modern Divinity* indeed, for I am sure there is nothing of the Primitive Ancient Divinity in it. Those good Men, those famous Lights of Christ's Church, neither knew nor taught any such Doctrines, but as they found, by sad Experience, that none (while here) were so perfect as not to transgress the Laws of Christ; so they were far enough from thinking that those Transgressions were not formal Sins even in the best of Men.

And therefore, as they taught with *St. John, 1 John. 1. 8.* that if the best Men said *they had no Sins, they would deceive themselves, and the Truth, &c.* so they taught too, that daily confessing of our Sins, daily Repentance for them, and daily Applications to the Mercies of God and Merits of Christ for the pardon:

pardon of them, was necessary for the most Righteous while they liv'd in this World.

2. But how then are we to understand this Passage in our Text? Why, I think, we shall best, and most distinctly do this, by considering that there are two Parts of the Law, or two Things considerable in it; the Preceptive (if I may so speak) *i. e.* the Thing commanded, or forbid; and the Sanction, *i. e.* the Punishment threatned to enforce Respect to it.

1. There are some that adventute to say (and perhaps, if well understood, safely enough) that the first was not given for a Righteous Man: Their Reason is, because a good Man needs not the Direction of an external Law to shew him his Duty, because he is in some Sense *a Law to himself*, as our Apostle speaks, *Rom. 2. 14.* he finds it written upon the Table of his own Heart and Mind, and needs not say, *who shall ascend into Heaven*, &c. to fetch him the Knowledge of it from thence, as some interpret another Passage in the same Epistle.

Thus it was (saith *Ireneus*) with the good Men that liv'd before *Moses*; they had no written Law, nor needed any, because they found (as I said before) the great Lines of Duty written upon their own Minds. Now it is in its proportion true of all good Men since, and what need they the Pedagogie of a Law to teach them their Duty, that understand it well enough, if they will attend to the Instruction of their own Minds and Consciences?

But

But I will not adventure to lay all the weight of this Saying only upon this Exposition (though I confess it hath very good Authority to plead;) for I do not think this inward Light so very clear in Men, but that they may want a clearer Director and Guide in many Cases; and I am sure the best Men have gladly accepted, and acknowledged the Benefit of the written Law and Revelation of God.

2. I would therefore rather think, that this Speech of our Apostle respects the Sanction of the Law; I mean the Penal part of it, *i. e.* which commands such Duties, and forbids such Sins, under the Penalty of Sufferings and Punishments, in case of neglecting the one, and committing the other. And this, I think, may be said not to be made for a Righteous Man in these two respects.

1. That it is not the Impellent of his Duty, or not the great Argument that influenceth his Obedience: He serves his God, and doth his Duty willingly, and from a vital Principle within, and so needs not the Rod of the Law to whip him to it. For what need of a Law (saith St. *Chrysostom*) to force them to Duty, who do it willingly of their own Accord, by the Influences, as well as Assistance of God's Spirit and Grace? and I find St. *Augustin*, St. *Hierome*, and others, quoted to the same purpose.

And this seems to be favoured by what our Apostle speaks so often of the Gospel Spirit, in opposition to the legal, calling one *the Spirit of Love*, as 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. and the other of *Bondage*, as *Rom.* 8. 15. one therefore is called the Spirit of a Child, which doth his Duty out of filial Respect and Love; the

other of a Slave, who doth what he doth only for Fear.

I am not of some ranting Enthusiasts Opinion, that it is altogether below a Good Man, to have either any regard to Reward or Punishment; I think Hope and Fear two very useful Passions in Man while he is in this State, and that it is not unbecoming Good Men to be influenced in some Measure by them. Though I do believe that the more a Man improves in the Divine Life, the more he gets from under their Government, and the less he needs them; and in time arrives to that settled State, and that sweet Relish of God and Goodness, as to be able with the good Man of old, to say, *Amor meus pondus meum*. Love is the great Weight that sets my Mind in Motion, and the prevailing Argument in all my Duty and Services to my God.

2. The Penal part of the Law is not made for a *Righteous Man*, because he is not obnoxious to it, nor within the reach of it. The Penalty of the Law is to be inflicted upon those only that transgress the Law, which a Righteous Man, so far as he is righteous, doth not; and for what he doth amiss, God will accept his Repentance, as a deletery of his Guilt, for the sake of what his Saviour hath done and suffered for him. Being made free from Sin, he is freed from the Curse due to Sin, and so in this Sense (as well as some others) *is not under the Law, but under Grace*.

This shall suffice for the Explanation of this Negative part of the Text, *The Law was not made for a Righteous Man*.

2. The next is the Positive, but *for the Lawless and Disobedient, i. e.* for Sinners in general, and for those notorious Sinners in particular, which are afterwards mentioned, as a just Reflection upon those impure *Gnosticks*, who taking upon them to be the most refin'd Expounders of the Law, were in the mean time the most gross and lewd Transgressors of it.

To our understanding of this there will need the less to be said, after what hath been offer'd upon the former. To proceed therefore here in the same Method we did before.

1. I observe first, Negatively, The Law was not made for the Lawless and Disobedient, &c. either first, to indulge them in their Wickedness; or, 2dly, protect them in doing amiss; or, 3dly, secure them from Punishment when they have done so. We are by no means to think the Apostle means any such things; and it were a gross misunderstanding the Reason and Design of Law to think so.

The same Apostle tells us, That Magistrates are appointed *for the Punishment of Evil-doers*; and the Law is the Instrument by which they punish them: And it were as gross a perverting the End of Laws, to slacken them in favour of an ill Man, as it would be to stretch and tenter them to the Prejudice and Punishment of the Innocent and Good.

2. The meaning then positively must be in some such Particulars as these that follow:

Either first, as to the directing part of the Law, to shew wicked Men their Duty, and to mark out their Sins; and perhaps this may be asserted not without

good Reason. For though the great Lines of Duty, and the difference between Good and Evil, be drawn pretty clear upon the Minds of all Men, and a Sense thereof wrought into the very Contexture of Human Nature, so that there is no pulling it out, without quite unravelling the whole.

Yet it may reasonably be presumed, that this Sense is much weakned and distorted, and this Innate Light greatly obscured in most Wicked Men: And I would fain hope, that a great part of the Wickedness committed in the World is done out of Ignorance, as much, or more, than Wilfulness. I would not willingly think so ill of Human Nature, or allow it to be degenerated to such monstrous degrees, as that all Men that sin, do so of *malicious Wickedness*, as the *Psalmist* speaks. Most Wicked Men, I hope, do not know when they do amiss, at least, do not actually consider that they do so.

So that upon both Reasons, the Law may be said to be wisely made for a Wicked Man, to supply the Light of his own Mind, which he hath obscured, and to force him to advert to that *Δαιμόν ἐν τερπεί*, that kind Monitor in his own Breast, which he by his wicked Arts hath endeavoured to silence and stop the Mouth of.

However this be, it may to be sure, be safely asserted, that the Law was *made for a Wicked Man*, upon these two Reasons that follow.

2. That it might restrain and curb the Evil Propensions of Men, and keep them in from breaking out into those Wickednesses that they are so very prone unto.

This is certainly the chief Design and Aim of Laws, not only by their Light to mark out all those Instances of Vice, which are so destructive to Men themselves, and especially to the Community of which they are Members (just as Buoys and Sea-marks are set to give notice to Marriners of Rocks and Shelves, that they may take care in time to avoid them;) but also by their Sanctions and Threatnings of Punishment, to fright Men from them.

For as well as Men love Sin, they love not the Suffering for it; and as violent and impetuous as their Inclinations are to the one, yet they may be checked and awed by the other.

Fear and Love are two most powerful Passions in Human Nature; and until all Wicked Men have quite put off these, or surmounted the force of them, the Sanctions of Law will have some effect upon them, because they cannot allow themselves to transgress, and incur those Penalties, till they have quite lost all love and respect to themselves, or quite extinguished all fear of Suffering. And whatever we may see to induce us to believe that hardened Sinners have done both these, yet I am apt to believe, that they are far from them. They do in truth but put a bold Face upon a bad Matter. They sin, not that they care not for Suffering, but that they hope they may escape it. They feel some secret Checks, and uneasy Bodings of Danger in their own Minds and Consciences; but they study Arts to weaken the Power of the one, and disargue the Presages of the other; and then they venture upon Sin with less regret or controul.

But



But certainly while the sense and fear of Suffering is fresh upon their Minds, self-love and fear will have some hold upon them; and then the threatnings of the Law will have some hold of them too, so as in some measure to be a curb and restraint upon them.

So that Laws are wisely and with great reason made to this purpose; and while humane Nature remains in any measure like it self, they will not fail of some effect upon Men. And it is owing chiefly to these, and God's immediate Interposition with them, that the World is not quite over-run with Wickedness and Confusion long before this time.

3. But there is a third Reason upon which the Law may be said to be made for a Wicked Man; and no doubt but the Apostle had respect to it, and that is, it is made for his Correction and Punishment.

This is also one great end of the Law, though I think but collateral and consequential; for as I think it would be a reflection upon Law, to say, that it directly intends Punishment and Suffering; so I think it as great a Mistake to say, that a Man obeys the Law, by suffering the Penalty threatned by it, as well as by doing the Duty commanded in it. Upon which Reason I profess, that to me there are some Difficulties in the Doctrine of *Active* and *Passive* Obedience, as they are commonly received, which I can never get over, till I can be perswaded to believe, that a Man is as obedient a Subject in dying for Treason, as in yielding faithful Allegiance to his Prince.

But I return to what I was saying; that though Laws are made to restrain Men from sinning, yet they are made too to punish them for sinning; and without this all their threatnings of Punishment were



to little purpose ; it would avail but little, as to the end of Law, to threaten Suffering and Punishment to Offenders, if it were not intended to execute what is threatned ; and (as perhaps will be said by and by) if sometimes when there is occasion, that which was threatned be not actually executed.

But I will stay no longer upon this Doctrinal part of my Discourse, but proceed immediately to the second.

II. General, which is to make it as useful as I can, by drawing some Inferences from it, which will shew this Discourse not to be wholly impertinent, or irrelative to the Reason of this Convention.

I. And first I observe from what hath been said, what a happiness it is to the World in general, and to Nations in particular, to be under Government and Laws.

There is abundance of Wickedness in the World (God knows,) but if it were not for Laws, there would certainly be a great deal more. And we that see how hardly Men are restrained from Sin, by all the Arts of Government, and utmost Severities of Laws, may easily tell (without the Spirit of Prophecy) how impetuous and violent they would be, were they not under these at all. All the Penalties and Threatnings of Punishment cannot over-awe Men so, but that they will venture upon Wickedness ; what would they do then, if they were under no apprehension or fear of them ?

It

It hath been commonly said, that without Government and Laws, the Societies of Men would be but so many wild *Arabian* Herds; and the truth is, they would be very little better. That state of War which the great Factor for Atheism, in this Nation, makes to be the natural state of Man, would be so still; where Men would be everlastingly clashing and fighting with one another, where Might would be the only Right; and where the Stronger would still be preying upon the Weaker; where there would be no such thing as Rights and Properties, nor any Man sure to enjoy any thing that he had, any longer than another should please not to dispossess him of it. A Man can hardly think, but no Man can fully describe the Misery and Confusion that would be among Men, the Fears and Jealousies that would still haunt and disturb them in such a State, without all hope or possibility of redress.

I have often thought, that it was not without some show of Reason at least, that those Men in the Heathen World of old, that had been happily instrumental in reducing Cities and Nations under Government and wise Laws, were honour'd after their Death with Divine Worship, Men thinking that the good they did to their respective Cities and Nations was so immensely great, that no mortal Honours were big enough to be returned for them. And upon the same reason did some wise Lawgivers easily persuade the People to believe, that they had their Laws from the Gods.

And the truth is, the benefit bespoke a God, and was worthy of a God, and no meaner a return was due for it; and all the fault was, that it was extravagantly

gantly misplaced upon those who were but only Instruments in these Blessings, under that great and good God, who hath fitted Men for Government, and inspired them with Knowledge and Skill to make Laws, that were both so useful to support Government, and so beneficial to those that were under it.

To him therefore be the praise of these Blessings always return'd. Let those great Men, that have been, or are Instruments under him, in conferring these Blessings, have all Honour and Respect fit to be paid to Mortal Beings. But let God be adored and praised both in them and for them.

And that I may bring this Inference something closer to our selves, let me observe, that if there be a Nation at this Day, under Heaven, that hath cause to bless Almighty God for this Happiness, we in this Kingdom and Nation have more. Other Nations are under Government, and doubtless have many wise and excellent Laws; but he that hath observed the state of those Governments, and those that live under them, and then reflects upon our own, may very well borrow the Verse of the Poet a little changed, *Felices nimium bona si sua norint.*— O happy *England*, if it would but think it self to be so; and be ready to think that there was nothing wanting to make this the happiest Government in the World, so much as Mens considering and being satisfied, that so it is.

A Government settled in that happy poise, that Subjects are as much secured from the power of the Prince, as the Prince is so from the Insults of the People, under no Laws but what themselves have an Interest in making, not liable to any Exactions to which themselves do not consent.

May God Almighty always continue it, and make

us duly thankful for it. And may all Factious and Seditious Persons, that would disturb, or overturn it, be mark'd for common Plagues, and avoided as such. May they feel the Penalties of those Laws which themselves despise, and of sharper too if they can be made. May they by a bleeding Experience find, that our Laws which are so much for the protection and benefit of good Men, were in truth made for such *lawless and disobedient* Wretches as themselves.

There are many excellent deductions that might be made from this Argument, but I must not think to have time allowed me for them. Therefore I shall only crave patience while I remark only one more. And that's this,

2. If the Laws be made for *disobedient and wicked* Men, then I hope it will be thought fit to execute them against such.

Here is a black List of some notorious Crimes following in the Text, and some so unnatural that a Man might think them hardly competent to Men. But there are several others besides them, that it may be deserve as severe an Animadversion of the Laws, and I would to God I could not say among our selves at this day.

It is a very melancholick Reflection to observe how strangely Profaneness is come to abound of late in this Nation, and to what a monstrous height it is grown, so as almost to scorn all Law, and bear down all restraint of it.

It is something strange, that in a sober Nation (as this hath been accounted) a Nation professing Godliness and Christian Religion; and this Religion reformed from many gross Errors, &c. that stick to it yet in many other Nations, I say it is something strange that in such a Nation, and where there are so many excellent Laws against it too, Wickedness should

over-

overflow, and cause such a dreadful Inundation.

It were perhaps worthy of an Inquiry what the Causes of this should be. And besides the common ones that always operated to this purpose, and always will, I believe these two will be found to be the most influential.

One is that wretched Artifice of our Enemies of the *Roman* Communion, and the Method that that blessed Sect of Jesuits have taken to bring us o'er to their Religion by; which was by unhinging Mens natural sense of Religion, and arguing them into Atheism, or a downright Scepticism and questioning the Obligations and Reasons of all Religion; yea, a studied propagating Sensuality and Looseness of Life and Manners, as well as of Belief.

It may well seem strange, that Atheism should be thought a likely way to bring Men to Religion, or Looseness in Life a good Method to make them good Catholics. If we consider things only superficially, we may very well question the Policy of this.

But alas we are deceiv'd if we do so. Those cunning Sophisters know what they do, and are as subtil as the old Serpent in it; bring Men to an Atheistical Temper once, and then all ways of Religion are alike to them. Debauch their Manners, and then if there must be any Religion, let it be the easiest, that which will allow the greatest latitude to Vice, and give hopes of Pardon upon the cheapest terms. And let the *R. Religion* alone for that.

We have liv'd to see the effect of this Policy, in the few Profelites that they gain'd, when they played their Game openly among us; when it was easie to see what was the most prevailing Argument in most of their Conversions.

Another Cause doubtless hath been from our own unhappy Differences and Conteſts about Religion a-

mong our selves. In the starting and fomenting of which, though it be notoriously known that they have had a great hand, yet we are so imprudent and unhappy, as to pursue their Methods against our selves.

The effect of these is too notorious to need instancing, it being natural for Men that see so many Religions to question all, or resolve to be of none, till all be agreed. Especially when they think they are indulg'd, or at least can pervert the meaning of an Indulgence to that purpose; for let it be marked as well as can be, it will be found, that as long as Men are indulg'd to be of what Religion they will, there will be a great many that will be of none at all. It is seen to be thus among us, and is plain matter of Fact. Men are permitted upon some Conditions to go to what places of Worship they think best, but abundance under that umbrage go to none at all; which though it be quite beside the Intention of the Law, yet it seems little notice is as yet taken of it.

Now when Religion is at so low an ebb among us, it is no wonder if all manner of Profaneness and Wickedness run high, and so high (as if not timely check'd) to be very likely in a little time to overflow all.

But therefore sure there is more need to give check to it, and stemm this Torrent by the strength of Laws. Which were they as vigorously executed, as they are wisely made, would go near to take down the Crests, and Confidences of wicked Men, and cool their courage in Sin. Men may Hector, and make a noise, but Law edg'd and back'd with strict Execution, would be too hard for them, and whatever Confederacies or Complications in Wickedness there might be, the Sword of Justice would as easily dissolve them, as that in the hand of *Alexander* did the *Gordian Knot*.

And

And thus far I dare say we are all agreed, but here comes in the great Question, how shall we get these Laws executed? and on whom doth that Obligation to execute them lye?

The Supream Authority and Power hath discharg'd it self, and gone as far in this as it can; both by making us good Laws, and awakening them too by repeated Proclamations, and Remembrances in Parliament; so that He that, under God, hath been so Instrumental in saving us from one Evil, hath shew'd himself willing and desirous too that we might be secured from worse.

But alas what can a poor Prince do more? He may recommend Virtue by his own Example; and He may discourage Profaneness by his Frowns; but alas few live under the Influence of the one, or within the reach of the other.

He may impart of his Power to others under him, and commission them as his Delegates to do Justice; but what if these be remiss, or neglect to do it? It is said that Kings have long Ears and Hands too; and it is true, because their Authority reacheth far, and can punish in the most most distant Places. But then it is as true, that they but see and hear with other Mens Eyes and Ears, and need them to give them Information of Misdeeds, as well as their Hands for the Execution of Law against them: And if those other Men fail in either of these, who, I pray, is to be blamed?

It is very well, and a Happiness to the whole Nation, that at some stated times the Laws are awakened by solemn Executions. But alas, what doth this signify whilst they lie dormant all the Year besides? What doth the Punishment, or Death of a few forlorn Thieves, desperate Robbers, or some few bloody Murderers signify, as to giving Check to the Wickedness of a Nation?



tion? There are other Sins perhaps, both as heinous in their Nature, and pernicious in their Effects as these, either not taken notice of, or not punished; as Lewdness, Whoredom, Cursing, Swearing, Fraud, and Knavery, Drunkenness, and all manner of Debauchery, &c. that brave even Authority, and laugh at Law.

My Lords the King's Justices can but punish what is brought before them; not be thought to know in a strange Country what is done amiss, and worthy of Punishment, unless it be presented to them; and what a little of the Wickedness done among us that is, who knows not?

It must be you, Gentlemen, that are the Guardians of Law, and the Guarantees of Peace in your Country, that must lend your Hand to this Work, if ever it be done. There cannot many things be done amiss (at least in many places) but they will come to your Cognizance, especially if you would please to be strict in taking account of those Officers that are under you, and let them see that you are really in earnest in your Charges to them.

I hope I need not use Arguments to persuade you to so good a Work; it commends it self sufficiently to all sober considering Men: It is a Work that would endear you to your God, making you (in a Sense) Saviours of your Country, and by the Mercies of God, save your own Souls in the great Day of the Lord Jesus.

If therefore you love and honour your God, rescue his Glory and great Name from the bold Profanations of Wicked Men. If you love and pity your Sin-sick Country, administer this Physick; without which her Disease will soon come to a woful Crisis. And if you love your selves, discharge worthily this high Trust, which your God and your Prince hath honoured you with,



with, that you may give up your Account with Joy at that great Day.

The Laws of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel are (I hope) faithfully made known, and the Terrors of the Lord urged upon Men, by those upon whom that Duty is incumbent: And if there be any that are either false to their Duty in this, or render it ineffectual by their own looseness, I thank God, I have no milder a Request to make for them, than that of our Apostle against these false Teachers related to in the Text, *Ὀφείλον καὶ ἀποκόψανται*. For as I do really believe a vicious Clergyman to be one of the worst of Men in himself, so I look upon him as the most infectious and pernicious in his Example. But I hope there is no need of this Reflection, but that we *shall approve our selves the Servants of Christ, and your Servants for Jesus sake.*

But alas, suppose these were never so faithful in their Duty, *who will believe their Report*, or be concerned at what they denounce against Sinners? Men live *by Sense*, and not *by Faith*; and things that are so distant make little impression upon them. They must be present and sensible Punishments that must have effect upon an unbelieving and profane Generation of Men.

While Religion stood only by its own strength, and the Church had only spiritual Weapons to war with, those Weapons were not *carnal*, but *mighty through God* as our Apostle, 2 Cor. 10. 4. For God was pleased to accompany those spiritual Censures with present Punishments; and to be delivered to Satan was for the destruction of the Flesh without a Figure.

But when Scepters bowed to the Cross of Christ, and Kings became *Nursing Fathers* to his Church, then God expected that the Temporal Sword should do that upon obstinate Offenders, which he had been pleased

to do by the Ministry of Angels, in consequence of the Spiritual: and so he expects it should do still, and therefore it is hoped those that bear the Sword, *will not bear it in vain.*

It will require some measure of Courage, and the Spirit of a sound Mind to do it, I confess: But what if it do? the Work will support it self, and yield you that inward satisfaction, and that comfort, which will bear you out against all the Reproaches and hard Words that can be cast upon you by an evil Generation.

And would such worthy Persons but suffer themselves to be effectually persuaded to one thing, whatever difficulties there might be in this Work, with God's Grace it might happily be effected. The thing I mean is this, Care to free themselves from those Vices, which they should punish in others; else it is to be feared they will never do it, or never with Courage and Success.

We say, when a Clergyman *takes heed to himself* as well as to his *Doctrine*, he speaks like his great Master, with *Authority and Power*; and when a Gentleman doth one, he doth the other too. Evil Men will reverence and dread such a one, but little regard all the Threats or Menaces of one as vicious themselves.

Here our so much wanted Reformation must begin, and when it doth so, then it will go on: Then may we begin to hope well, when we see *living Sermons*, and *living Laws*; when the Lives of those in Authority as much reprove and shame, as their Power doth fright, and punish the *Lawless and Disobedient*, against whom they let them see, and feel too, that the Law was made, and not against a Righteous Man.

*Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three Persons and One God, be ascribed Dominion, Power and Glory, for evermore. Amen.*

F I N I S.

